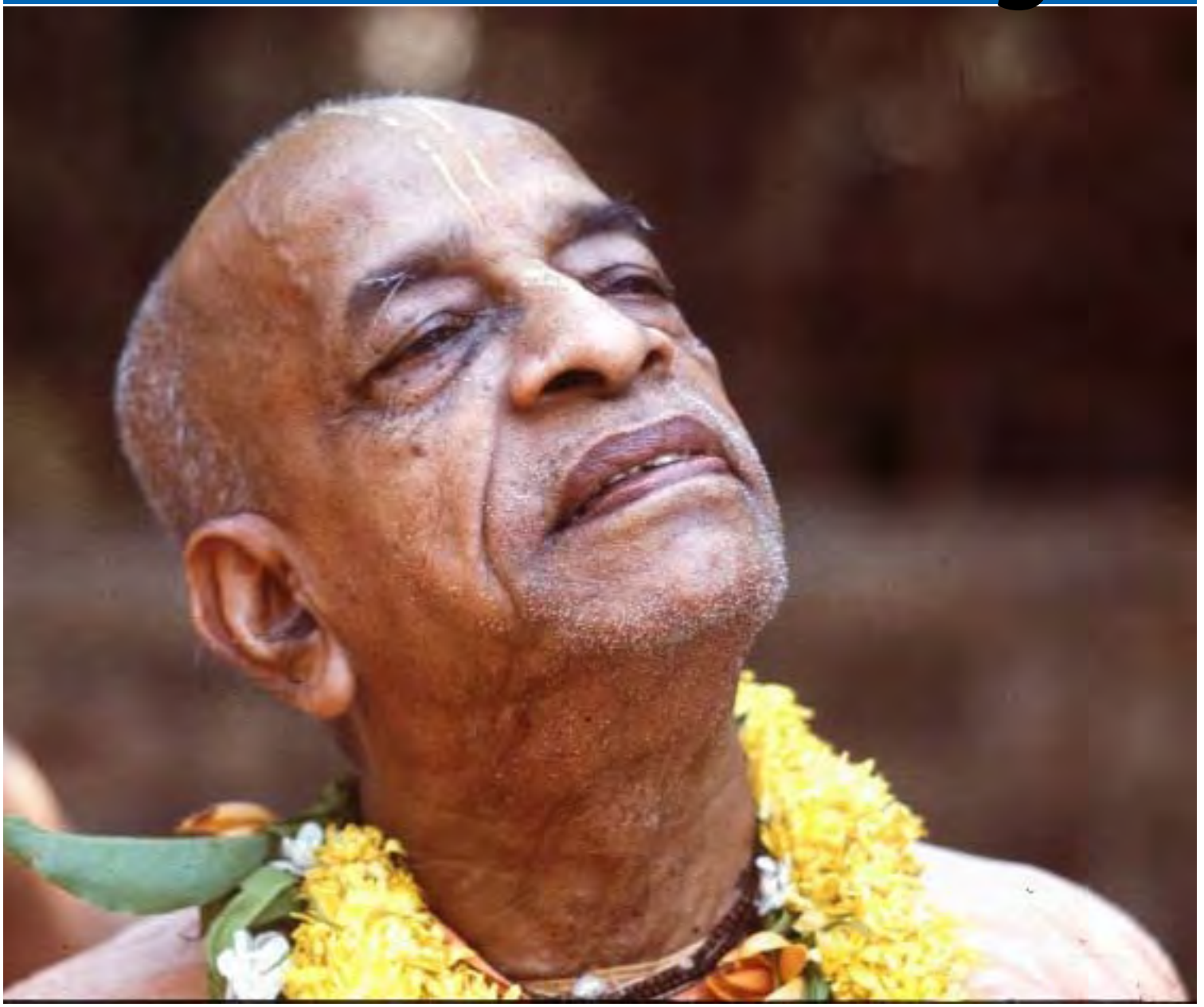
Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare

ISKCON was set up to run solely under the authority of Srila Prabhupada. There was no authorisation for any change to be made to the way he had instructed and set up ISKCON to run.

The No Change In ISKCON Paradigm



CONTENTS:

N.C.I.P. Enshrined By GBC Resolution	1
Further Evidence From the Will	2
Is Initiation an Exception to the N.C.I.P?	3
Further evidence initiation comes within the N.C.I.P.	4
July 9th Directive	5
Evidence Needed for Exemption of Initiation	6
May 28th Tape	7
What is being spoken about?	8
Conclusion	11

The No Change In ISKCON Paradigm

By Krishnakant

Iskcon Revival Movement

Thus the standards and processes that were personally set up and sanctioned by Srila Prabhupada, are supposed to continue for the rest of the duration of ISKCON.

Let this be known as the **'NO CHANGE IN ISKCON PARADIGM,'** henceforward to be known as **N.C.I.P.**

Mar 16 1999 — During the period of his physical presence, Srila Prabhupada gave the blue-print for how ISKCON was to operate. He personally established and gave all the necessary standards, systems, processes, and teachings that were to govern how ISKCON would run for the rest of its existence. ISKCON was set up to run solely under the authority of Srila Prabhupada. There was no authorisation for any change to be made to the way he had instructed and set up ISKCON to run. Thus there was to be a continuity between the way International Society for Krishna Consciousness ran whilst he was physically present, and for the rest of ISKCON's duration. Any deviation from this principle would have needed express authority from Srila Prabhupada.

N.C.I.P. Enshrined By GBC Resolution

Thus, in theory at least, ISKCON is governed by the N.C.I.P., with ISKCON's governing body and members expected to maintain and apply only those standards and practices directly given by Srila Prabhupada. The very idea of change and speculation being entirely antithetical to the purposes of ISKCON. From the very beginning this principle, N.C.I.P., was enshrined within ISKCON law:

> "**The GBC has been established by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada to represent Him in carrying out the responsibility of managing the International Society for Krsna Consciousness of which He is the Founder-Acarya and supreme authority. The GBC accepts as its life & soul His divine instructions and recognises that it is completely dependent on His mercy in all respects. *The GBC has no other function or purpose other than to execute the instructions so kindly given by His Divine Grace and preserve and spread His Teachings to the world in their pure form.*** " (Definition of GBC, Resolution 1, GBC minutes 1975, emphasis added)

This resolution was passed specifically to set out and define exactly how ISKCON would be managed, and was directly approved by Srila Prabhupada. It specifies very clearly what the responsibilities and boundaries would be for the GBC, who would be responsible for running the society.

In running ISKCON, the GBC:

1. Can only implement instructions directly issued by Srila Prabhupada:

'The GBC has no other function or purpose than to execute the instructions so kindly given by His Divine Grace'

2. The GBC must keep intact and apply only that which Srila Prabhupada has taught:

'and preserve and spread His Teachings to the world in their pure form.'

These being the two key aspects of GBC governance, we can see the GBC were intended as the natural guardian angels of the N.C.I.P.

N.C.I.P. Enshrined by Will

The authority of the GBC (and hence the N.C.I.P.) to reign supreme throughout every aspect of ISKCON, for as long as it exists, is further specified in Srila Prabhupada's Last Will and Testament:

> **1. The Governing Body Commission (GBC) will be the ultimate managing authority of the entire International Society for Krishna Consciousness.** (Opening Statement, Srila Prabhupada's Last Will and Testament)

To ensure there was no doubt about how ISKCON was to be run for its duration, the very first item of the Will opens with a statement reinforcing the N.C.I.P. Item 1 makes it clear that the scope of the GBC is complete and ultimate for the life-time of ISKCON. This also means that the N.C.I.P. is also complete and ultimate for ISKCON, since acting within the N.C.I.P. is the very definition of the GBC as given above.

There are two mistaken interpretations of the term 'ultimate managing authority'. One understanding grants the GBC far more power than they were ever intended by interpreting it to mean they are completely empowered to do as they please. Such an interpreter seems to get carried away by the word 'ultimate'. This understanding confuses the fact that the GBC is the topmost managing authority for ISKCON, as stated in the will, with how they were supposed to manage, which is not stated in the will. The way in which they were meant to manage is set out in the articles of definition, as already given, which were personally approved by Srila Prabhupada. This approved definition of the GBC makes it clear that all management must be undertaken solely within the parameters of the N.C.I.P. The second interpretation of the phrase 'ultimate managing authority' would have it that the GBC only has scope to act in issues relating specifically to 'management', due to the phrase 'managing authority'. This limiting interpretation is also incorrect since it confuses the term 'managing authority', which specifies the GBC's complete authority for the function of management, with what they can manage. In effect what these interpreters do is substitute the term 'managing authority' with the phrase 'authority for management issues'.

The Will does not give a detailed list of all the things the GBC must manage, or even how they must manage. That information was already given, and was established through GBC resolutions such as those above along with all the other relevant instructions and teachings of Srila Prabhupada.

Since Srila Prabhupada gave instructions and teachings on both spiritual and managerial issues, it follows that the GBC have 'ultimate managing authority' over all aspects, both managerial and spiritual. There is a large **'but'** however, and this is the key.

How the GBC exercised its managing authority was given clearly in the above definition, and that authority is thus set clearly within the N.C.I.P. parameter. Thus Srila Prabhupada set a perfect balance. The 'ultimate' authority of the GBC is checked by the fact that it must only use this authority for one purpose and one purpose only, to preserve and execute the instructions and teachings given by Srila Prabhupada. This 'ultimate' authority can only be used to keep Srila Prabhupada's instructions and teachings absolute, and absolutely the same. Since there is no power to change, but only the power to 'maintain', the GBC are checked in abusing this power, for as soon as the power is used inappropriately they are acting outside the boundaries set for them by Srila Prabhupada.

Thus the GBC:

A) Cannot change anything already given by Srila Prabhupada;

B) Or introduce anything other than that already given by Srila Prabhupada.

Items A) and B) form the N.C.I.P., since the basis for what the GBC can *'manage'* is only that which was given by Srila Prabhupada pre-*samadhi*, and so we are dealing with the maintenance and continuity of everything pre-*samadhi* into the post-*samadhi* period - namely the N.C.I.P.

Further Evidence From the Will

That the opening statement of the will supports the N.C.I.P. is further reinforced by the very next clause:

> **Each temple will be an ISKCON property and will be managed by three executive directors. The system of management will continue as it is now and there is no need of any change.** (Srila Prabhupada's Last Will and Testament)

So however ISKCON was managed pre-*samadhi*, that was meant to continue for the duration of ISKCON. This could hardly have been made clearer: *'The system of management will continue as it is now and there is no need of any change.'* Above we see Srila Prabhupada directly spelling out the N.C.I.P.

It has been argued that since the above sentence from the will appears next to a sentence to do with a specific system for managing temples, the above sentence can only be referring back to this first sentence, and is thus not all encompassing. In effect it is being argued Srila Prabhupada specially included a clause for the exclusive protection of the following practise: *'Each temple will be an ISKCON property and will be managed by three executive directors.'*

This does not make sense for a number of reasons:

It follows therefore that the books were written to support an ISKCON that was meant to continue unchanged from pre to post-samadhi. Thus the books are meant for an ISKCON where there is a complete continuity in the application of Srila Prabhupada's instructions and teachings - whatever was in place pre-samadhi must also be in place post-samadhi. This is what we term the N.C.I.P. The will says **'The system of management'** i.e. it is generic; and is without any restrictions or referents. It does not say **'This system of management'** or **'The aforementioned system of management'.** Thus the clause must refer to all systems of management, not just the one about the three executive directors.

If the 'no change' clause only referred to the 'executive directors' system, then this would imply any other system could be changed or scrapped altogether. Indeed this would leave the GBC themselves open to redundancy as the 'ultimate managing authority' - as given in the first item of the will. Surely then the GBC themselves would wholeheartedly support the idea that the call for 'no change' must refer to all systems of management., not just the principle of having 'three executive directors' for each temple.

Allowing the 'no change' clause to be generally applicable makes it consistent with what has already been demonstrated. That the management of ISKCON must continue as it is and not be changed - the N.C.I.P.

Thus the second item of the Will merely reinforces the first, which then both reinforce the N.C.I.P., which had already been established years before in the definition of the GBC personally approved by Srila Prabhupada. In this way everything slots into place without anomaly or inconsistency.

N.C.I.P. Supported By the Books

Though the above is sufficient in itself to establish N.C.I.P., further supporting evidence is given by Srila Prabhupada's books. It is accepted without dispute by all in ISKCON that Srila Prabhupada's books are the 'lawbooks' for ISKCON, meant to guide ISKCON for the whole of its duration, which could be up to 10,000 years:

> **"If death takes place, let it take here. So there is nothing to be said new. Whatever I have to speak, I have spoken in my books. Now you try to understand it and continue your endeavour. Whether I am present or not present, it doesn't matter."** (Arrival Address, Vrindavan, May 17th, 1977)

This means that:

1. The books are definitely applicable for the post-*samadhi* period just as much as the pre-*samadhi* period, since separate books were not written for each period.

2. The teachings and standards that were personally established by Srila Prabhupada, and which are mentioned in his books, are equally applicable during the pre-*samadhi* period.

It follows therefore that the books were written to support an ISKCON that was meant to continue unchanged from pre to post-*samadhi.* Thus the books are meant for an ISKCON where there is a complete continuity in the application of Srila Prabhupada's instructions and teachings - whatever was in place pre-*samadhi* must also be in place post-*samadhi.* This is what we term the N.C.I.P.

Is Initiation an Exception to the N.C.I.P?

As indicated, the N.C.I.P. is not in any sense alien to modern day ISKCON.

In most areas of ISKCON's theology, practice and management the N.C.I.P. is vigorously enforced, with devotees proclaiming proudly that they will never deviate from what Srila Prabhupada has taught. When there has been any perceived deviation from the N.C.I.P., strenuous attempts are made to return us to Srila Prabhupada's standards as practised and taught pre-*samadhi.*

Indeed the GBC has acted very strongly in recent controversies over the 'origin of the soul', 'gopi-bhava', and the ''Gaudiya Matha', to bring things back in line with the N.C.I.P. The very idea of 'change' or 'speculation' within ISKCON is severely frowned upon. Thus the N.C.I.P. is already, in theory at least, the guiding principle for ISKCON management.

So it is with some surprise that we find in one specific area, and one area only, the GBC assert quite forcefully that the N.C.I.P. must be discarded; even though it is generally applicable everywhere else. This is in the area of initiation. We do not need to examine why there is this anomaly. Our only concern here is to see if there are any supporting instructions from Srila Prabhupada making a special case for N.C.I.P. to be set aside with regards to the system of initiation within ISKCON.

Initiation Specifically Covered Within Proofs

It has been noted that we have already established N.C.I.P. as an ongoing principle applicable to every area and aspect of ISKCON. Unless otherwise demonstrated therefore, initiation must automatically be covered by the no change paradigm, since the proofs above did not make any reference to a special 'get-out' clause on the subject of initiation. To further strengthen the above assertion, we will now show how each of the proofs for N.C.I.P. incorporate the issue of initiation, and so there is no reason to exempt initiation from the N.C.I.P. that is otherwise staunchly and rightly defended by the GBC.

The GBC's Managing Authority

Regarding the GBC having 'ultimate authority' in all aspects of management, in 1975, in Srila Prabhupada's presence, the GBC acted and passed resolutions in the area of initiation:

> **"In Order to receive first initiation, one must have been a full time member for 6 months. For second initiation there should be at least another one year after the second initiation."** (Resolution No. 9, March 25th, 1975)

The above resolution was not just made up by the GBC, it was personally approved by Srila Prabhupada, and is also mentioned in his teachings. Thus we can see that the GBC are also supposed to manage all aspects of initiation. And we have established above that this management was to be done in line with the N.C.I.P. (to only 'execute the instructions' and 'preserve' the teachings).

The Will

In relation to the will, we have already seen the statement:

'The system of management will continue as it is now and there is no need of any change.'

As shown earlier, the 'system of management' statement above cannot solely relate to the previous sentence. Even if we were to grant that the reference to management was limited in some way to the previous sentence, at the very least it must refer to temple management generally. Otherwise the implication would be that all other aspects of temple management such as having a temple president, treasurer, worship of the deities, recruiting and training new devotees etc., were available to change and distortion. Are we to believe that for some esoteric reason the only sacrosanct element in all of ISKCON's management is the need to have three executive directors and to register every property in the name of ISKCON? No-one would deny the importance of this system, but it is hard to see how it would merit special and exclusive preservation over and above every other aspect of temple management, or indeed for that matter every other aspect of managing ISKCON, as mentioned previously.

One of the main purposes of establishing an ISKCON temple is to spread Krsna Consciousness and make new devotees. Thus the temple standards in respect of devotees joining, being trained up and recommended for initiation, is key to managing a temple. The system for training and initiating devotees at the time the Final Will came into effect included devotees being initiated after 6 months practise on the recommendation of a temple president to a local priestly representative. These representatives would then be obliged to ensure a connection with Srila Prabhupada as the diksa guru. Thus again we have an application that relates right back to the issue at hand - how initiations will be conducted in the institution, and once again we see it follows the N.C.I.P.. Just as Srila Prabhupada had always been the diksa guru, so he should have continued, without change. Change only being able to arise out of a specific order for it to occur.

The Books

In his books, Srila Prabhupada specifically set out how the initiations would be carried out in the institution of ISKCON:

> **"Thus in the beginning the students of our Krsna consciousness movement agree to live with devotees, and gradually, having given up four prohibited activities--illicit sex, gambling, meat-eating and intoxication--they become advanced in the activities of spiritual life. When one is found to be regularly following these principles, he is given the first initiation (hari-nama), and he regularly chants at least sixteen rounds a day. Then, after six months or a year, he is initiated for the second time and given the sacred thread with the regular sacrifice and ritual."**
>
> (*C.c., Adi* 17:265)
>
> **"Due to the necessity of these activities, we do not immediately initiate disciples in the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. For six months, a candidate for initiation must first attend arati and classes in the sastras, practice the regulative principles and associate with other devotees. When one is actually advanced in the purascarya-vidhi, he is recommended by the local temple president for initiation. It is not that anyone can be suddenly initiated without meeting the requirements. When one is further advanced by chanting the Hare Krsna mantra sixteen rounds daily, following the regulative principles and attending classes, he receives the sacred thread (brahminical recognition) after the second six months."**
>
> *(C.c.,Madhya* 15:108)
>
> **"In our Krsna consciousness movement, the requirement is that one must be prepared to give up the four pillars of sinful life-illicit sex, meat-eating, intoxication and gambling. In Western countries especially, we first observe whether a potential disciple is prepared to follow the regulative principles. Then he is given the name of a Vaisnava servant and initiated to chant the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra*, at least sixteen rounds daily. In this way the disciple renders devotional service under the guidance of the spiritual master or his representative for at least six months to a year. He is then recommended for a second initiation, during which a sacred thread is offered and the disciple is accepted as a bona fide *brahmana*."**
>
> (*C.c., Madhya* 24:330)

So we can clearly see that the books, which naturally support the N.C.I.P., make specific reference to the initiation system to be applied in ISKCON. This can only refer to being initiated by Srila Prabhupada, since this is exactly what happened pre-*samadhi* in precisely the manner described above. And by the N.C.I.P., the above is exactly what must happen post-*samadhi* as well. Neither is there any mention above of the adjustments that would be required to operate a multi-guru system as is currently in operation in ISKCON. A multi-guru system could not follow the above stated model since it would require many different procedures to accommodate the many new diksa gurus along with the terms and means of choice and verification of acceptance.

And if ISKCON were to adopt exactly the same procedures as described by Srila Prabhupada above, not only would it mean completely abandoning the current 'M.A.S.S.' guru system in ISKCON, but also since the process for diksa would be identical to that which was operating pre-samadhi, why would the identity of the diksa guru suddenly need to change, since nothing would have changed? Thus the books mention initiation explicitly, and since they are to be applied in line with the N.C.I.P., again no exemption for initiation is justified.

Summary

We have demonstrated that the N.C.I.P. is enshrined by Srila Prabhupada through his GBC and a defining GBC resolution; through his last will and testament, and through his books. Remember that N.C.I.P. is not a philosophical teaching or doctrine, but merely a paradigm under which International Society for Krishna Consciousness must operate in relation to the teachings and instructions given by Srila Prabhupada. We have shown that in reference to all of Srila Prabhupada's instructions and teachings that he established and practised pre-samadhi, the N.C.I.P. applies across the board, with no specific exemptions or get-out clauses to this paradigm mentioned by Srila Prabhupada.

The above establishes the case for the N.C.I.P. without any legitimate exemptions for any area of management policy.

However, just to seal the case even further, the very subject for which an exemption to the N.C.I.P. is claimed, i.e. initiation, is also dealt with in the actual proofs themselves.

So it is irrefutable from every angle that the N.C.I.P. holds, and that there is definitely no exemption permitted in the case of initiation.

Further evidence initiation comes within the N.C.I.P.

We have seen that the N.C.I.P. is a factual reality, taught by Srila Prabhupada and theoretically accepted and practised by the GBC; and also that initiation is not exempt since the proofs for N.C.I.P. specifically encompass this issue. However, there is a third level of proof put in place that indicates Srila Prabhupada's *tri-kala-jna* sensibilities. Aware that initiation was the one issue on which exemption might be claimed, Srila Prabhupada went even further and issued a specific stand alone directive exclusively on the initiation issue just before he departed, even though he had already established the N.C.I.P. on two distinct levels. In this way initiation would be the one issue over which there could be no doubt.

July 9th Directive

Srila Prabhupada specifically issued an institutional directive where the application of N.C.I.P. to initiation was spelt out very clearly. This directive was issued on July 9th and sent out to all the leaders and managers of ISKCON as the policy to be implemented in ISKCON from that point onwards. In effect, to avoid the very claims for exemption being made now, it simply formalised, with some amendments, the practice that had been common in ISKCON for many years. Only now the amendment meant that the practice could continue in ISKCON without the need for any physical involvement from Srila Prabhupada, and it became enshrined as the official policy for the whole movement to follow under the management of the GBC.

This directive was very important since sometimes in religious institutions the acarya or head issues a document shortly before his departure detailing how the Guru succession of the institution would be handed over, perhaps to a certain named individual. However, with this directive Srila Prabhupada made it clear to the whole movement that the arrangements which were already in place, with him as the sole initiating (diksa) guru for the whole movement, would continue. The directive states that all new recruits to the movement would be 'initiated disciples' of Srila Prabhupada only, with the named representatives, acting only as that, representatives. This point is made 3 times, in a directive which is itself very short (2 paragraphs) and to the point.

This directive was the final communication on this issue, and was issued only 120 days before Srila Prabhupada's departure, and after the 'Last Will and Testament' had already been registered:

We have already demonstrated above how the management of such a directive by the GBC according to the N.C.I.P. would entail this directive being operational in ISKCON even post-samadhi. In line with N.C.I.P., the directive naturally sets out a system that is applicable for the institution of ISKCON generally, and is not an instruction that was sent out to be specifically terminated on Srila Prabhupada's departure. The following characteristics of the directive merely reinforce this point, establishing it as a permanent management directive for the institution, applicable both pre- and post-departure equally to the institution.

1. This directive was issued with two signatures, one the secretary of the institution (who sent it out) and one from the head of the institution, Srila Prabhupada, who approved it. Though the directive was issued on July 9th, 1977, it was sent out to all GBC members physically on July 21st in a letter written by another GBC, Ramesvara Swami. In this letter the directive is referred specifically to as a 'document' along with the Last Will and Testament, which was also sent out at the same time. (This letter is enclosed). Thus the validity and importance of this directive is beyond question.
2. The recipient of the directive is an institution (via the trustees/managing officers of the institution), that was set up specifically to exist after the departure of the Founder.
3. The nature of the directive relates to activities to be conducted only by the institution's managing officers in the future.
4. The purpose of the directive as given at the outset of the document, is given in generic not specific terms - "the purpose of performing initiations, both first initiation and second initiation." Though the rest of the document makes it clear that those initiated will definitely belong to the Founder only, and specific officers are named to assist in the process, the fact that the purpose is stated generically establishes that the instruction was to remain in force within the institution for as long as that purpose needed servicing. In this case that purpose would be the need for 'performing initiations, both first initiation and second initiation'. This purpose of course will need to be fulfilled as long as the institution exists.

Thus the nature, the recipient, the executors and purpose of the directive all tie its applicability to the institution. In such a circumstance only the demise of the institution would have any legal or logical effect in determining the longevity of the system set out in the directive, not the demise of the Founder who assented to the instruction. Thus the system set out in the directive must remain in force as the system for the institution, as long as the institution remains.

Supporting Instructions

The directive opens by confessing itself to be the outcome of a previous conversation that took place with Srila Prabhupada's senior disciples in Vrindavana. The GBC have insisted that this previous conversation is the May 28th 'appt tape'. However this conversation makes it clear that the *ritviks* to be appointed, as set out in the directive, were for 'particularly at that time' when Srila Prabhupada 'is no longer with us'.

Thus this conversation tends to confirm the directive, not contradict it.

In addition to this directive further instructions were issued re-conforming this directive, and also specifically emphasising the permanence of this instruction, with words such as 'continue' and 'future'. (See letters from the secretary to Kirtanananda and Hamsaduta Swamis).

Also in the last will and testament, having seen the evidence from statements 1 and 2 above, we can turn to statement 3, whereby the following instruction regarding the appointment of future executive directors for certain ISKCON properties in India is given:

> **"The executive directors who have herein designated are appointed for life. In the event of the death or failure to act for any reason of any of the said directors, a successor director or directors may be appointed by the remaining directors, provided the new director is <u>MY INITIATED DISCIPLE</u> following strictly all the rules and regulations of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness as detailed in my books, and provided that there are never less than three (3) and five (5) executive directors acting at one time."** (Statement 3, The Last Will and Document, Emphasis Added)

Here we see a post-departure arrangement for the institution, that is consistent with the directive in question, using the same language as the directive, and which could only be implemented if the directive was implemented. This is because in the absence of the directive there would be no arrangement for the production of future **'INITIATED DISCIPLES'** of Srila Prabhupada, and thus the pool of potential executive directors would soon be exhausted. Thus the last will and testament also enshrines the N.C.I.P. in another place specifically in relation to initiation.

In summary, so there could be no room for doubt on this issue, Srila Prabhupada went to the trouble of:

1. **Enshrining the N.C.I.P as the parameter for how his institution was to be managed;**
2. **Giving specific applications of this in the matter of initiation;**
3. **Explicitly setting out separate instructions for initiation in the last days before his departure.**

Really this should be the last subject on which anyone could claim exemption from the N.C.I.P.

Evidence Needed for Exemption of Initiation

Now what has gone so far should actually serve as over-kill in the matter of demonstrating that not only is the N.C.I.P. applicable for ISKCON now, but also that initiation is the one area where there cannot be any case for deviation from the N.C.I.P. We have given several types and levels of proof above for N.C.I.P., and its applicability in the matter of initiation. Just the first level of proof alone would be sufficient to firmly establish the N.C.I.P.. We have three levels of proof all supporting no change, and specifically no change to ISKCON's *diksa* guru.

Consequently the onus is firmly and squarely on anyone who dares to propose some deviation from this official, standard ISKCON tradition.

Obviously the quality of evidence required would need to be staggeringly unambiguous and overwhelming clear to justify such a major change. In summary the evidence would need to satisfy the following 3 criteria:

1. Due to above background, the evidence would constitute direct instructions from Srila Prabhupada of unparalleled magnitude and definitiveness, to not only justify a change from the N.C.I.P. in any area, but specifically in the area of initiation.
2. Further since we are speaking of making a change in the N.C.I.P that was being implemented and managed by the GBC, the instructions would have to be directed to the GBC, so that they would be able to implement them. This is because we are talking about making changes in the way a whole institution operates, thus we need instructions for these changes that are as clear and comparable to the instructions that established the N.C.I.P. within the institution in the first place. We would need such clear unequivocal instructions to be present for example in: GBC resolutions, the last will and testament, the books, and directives to the whole movement. Instructions only received privately by individuals, or on a one-off basis by a fraction of the institution do not satisfy the requirement to make an institutional change, which is what we are taking about here. Changes in the institution must be directed to the managers of the institution in order to be applicable at institutional level.
3. Further the actual nature of the exemption claimed makes the quality of the evidence required even more definitive. The exact claim that is made is NOT that initiation is exempt from the N.C.I.P. per se, but rather that initiation is exempt only after a certain time period - i.e the moment after Srila Prabhupada departed. Thus the evidence required must be very exacting, since not only are we looking for an exemption, but a time-controlled exemption. This means that that any evidence put forward for the exemption has to not only support the exemption, but also ONLY support the exemption post-*samadhi*. If there is not specific reference made to the conditional nature of the exemption in terms of its time for applicability, then the evidence is not actually supporting that which is actually claimed.

Thus as well as establishing that there must be substantial evidence put forward in order to claim an exemption for initiation from the N.C.I.P., we have also established that this evidence must further satisfy 3 criteria:

1. It must be completely clear-cut, and overwhelming, with no room for doubt whatsoever, due to the magnitude of the change proposed.
2. It must be directed at and applicable for implementation by the GBC, since this was the only channel established by Srila Prabhupada authorised to make such a change.
3. It must also specify the specific time-limited nature of the exemption.

Please note the evidence must satisfy ALL 3 criteria, otherwise it is no good. For instance having an instruction sent to the GBC, which simply mentions the concept of initiation being carried out after Srila Prabhupada departs, but NOT specifically instituting this change by authorising persons to initiate, (and thus satisfying criteria 2 and 3, but not 1) is useless, and is no better than evidence that did not satisfy ANY of the 3 criteria, in terms of its value in authorising an exemption for initiation from the N.C.I.P.

This establishes the background. Lets us now examine if evidence satisfying these 3 criteria does indeed exist.

The Evidence Put Forward

The evidence put forward for claiming exemption from N.C.I.P. for initiation falls into 3 categories:

A) Evidence from the May 28th tape.

B) Evidence from the repeated orders to 'become guru'.

C) Evidence from the nature and history of the *parampara.*

Let us examine each of these evidences in turn:

May 28th Tape

This evidence consists of a short taped segment of conversation held between Srila Prabhupada and his disciples. Ignoring interruptions, the conversation consists effectively of 6 questions posed by disciples with Srila Prabhupada answering them. The first question is the key question, with all the subsequent questions merely being attempts to try and clarify this initial question and its answer. Below we reproduce this conversation with these 6 exchanges given the same numbering for both the question asked and the corresponding response given by Srila Prabhupada to that question:

Satsvarupa: "Then our next question concerns initiations in the future, particularly at that time when you are no longer with us. We want to know how first and second initiations will be conducted."(1)

Srila Prabhupada: "Yes. I shall recommend some of you. After this is settled up. I shall recommend some of you to act as officiating *acarya*."(1)

Tamala Krishna: "Is that called *ritvik-acarya*?"(2)

Srila Prabhupada: " *ritvik*. Yes."(2)

Satsvarupa: "What is the relationship of that person who gives the initiation and..."(3)

Srila Prabhupada: "He's guru. He's guru."(3)

Satsvarupa: "But he does it on your behalf."(4)

Srila Prabhupada: "Yes. That is formality. Because in my presence one should not become guru, so on my behalf. On my order, *amara ajnaya guru hana,* be actually guru. But on my order."(4)

Satsvarupa: "So they maybe considered your disciples?"(5)

Srila Prabhupada: "Yes, they are disciples but consider... who..."(5)

Tamala Krishna: "No. He is asking that these *ritvik-acaryas*, they are officiating, giving *diksa*, their - the people who they give *diksa* to - whose disciples are they?"(6)

Srila Prabhupada: "They are his disciples."(6)

Tamala Krishna: "They are his disciples."

Srila Prabhupada: "Who is initiating...Hes grand-disciple..."(6)

Satsvarupa: "Then we have a question concerning..."

Srila Prabhupada: When I order you become guru, he becomes regular guru. That's all. He becomes disciple of my disciple. That's it. (6)

The following points are to be noted:

1. In an investigation into the authenticity of the taped conversation, sponsored by the GBC, their own expert concluded that until and unless a full forensic examination is conducted on the tape, it cannot be relied on as authentic evidence. To date no such examination has been conducted by the GBC.

2. Though the conversation is very short, already the GBC have officially given 5 different transcripts for the above conversation. Above we have simply selected one of them. Thus there is no clarity even over WHAT exactly the evidence consists of.

3. A key word *'He's'* used twice, in exchanges 3 and 6, and on which the whole GBC case rests, cannot be clearly identified by the naked ear as being the word *'He's'* rather then the word 'His', since the sounds are very similar. Even the GBC have themselves used the latter rendition in one of their transcripts. The one thing which can be said with certainty though is that only one word is spoken. Thus the rendition 'He is' can definitely be rejected. To appreciate the importance of this, please note that if the word in exchange 6 was 'His', rather than *'He's',* then it can be established without doubt that Srila Prabhupada does speak in the 3rd person in that part of the conversation. This is because the term in exchange 6 would be 'HIS Grand-disciple', and the 'HIS' here could ONLY refer to Srila Prabhupada, since as even the GBC admit, it is only he who could possibly have grand-disciples.

4. Out of the 6 exchanges, the clearest and unambiguous exchanges on the tape - Nos 1, 2 & 5 - half of them, including the key opening exchange, actually all verbatim support the N.C.I.P., with them all being directly congruent with the July 9th directive, which was actually the written output from this discussion, as indicated in the opening statement of the directive itself. Even the same language is used - *'ritviks',* and 'disciples' of Srila Prabhupada. And the rest of the exchanges, depending, on the transcript adopted (see point above) can also in any case be given an explanation in line with the N.C.I.P. (Indeed so damning is the opening exchange, that the GBC where forced recently to overturn all their teaching on the *'ritvik'* heresy for the last 20 years because of their inability to explain this opening exchange, and state that Srila Prabhupada DID indeed order *ritviks* to act for after his departure; the very notion that they had been opposing all along. But only now, the GBC claims, the word *'ritvik'* is just another term for *'diksa* guru'! However such somersaults have yet to be accepted by many

other members on the GBC, who are still operating under the old paradigm that *ritviks* can only act in the presence of the spiritual master, and are entities that are completely different to *diksa* gurus, acting only on behalf of the said *diksa* gurus. Each attempt by the GBC to explain what the words on the tape meant has led to many varying and contradictory interpretations. Thus even in the matter of deciding what the tape means the GBC are divided. (We have already seen they cannot even decide on what the tape says). The exchanges above are given many different interpretations by the GBC. These differences are not just minor but fundamental; differing in not just what is being spoken about, but also the time period being referred to, and precisely how Srila Prabhupada is instructing things to be carried out - all pretty damning when the subject under consideration is what, how and when things should be done. We give these different explanations below:

Time-frame.

It is claimed that exchanges in the tape relate to both what should be done whilst Srila Prabhupada is present, and also what should be done after he departs. (*'Under My order',* 1985, Ravindra Svarupa) (*GII*, 1995, Ravindra Svarupa, Jayapataka Maharaja and others) Another view is that he is speaking throughout the whole tape only about what to do once he departs. (*'Disciple of My Disciple'*, 1997, Badri, Giridhari & Umapati)

What is being spoken about?

One view is that the word *'ritvik'* used by Srila Prabhupada refers to proxies. (*GII* & *Under My Order*)

Another completely opposite view is that *'ritvik'* means *Diksa* guru (*DOMD*, Drutakarma prabhu)

Thus from the outset, the GBC have completely opposing views, being unable to decide amongst themselves conclusive positions on even the most basic fundamental points.

Exchange (4)

Here again there are at least two different opinions:

1. One view states that the expression *'so on my behalf'* means that one should act as a proxy or *ritvik* for Srila Prabhupada while he is physically present. (*GII, 'Under My Order'*)
2. The other view states that the phrase *'on my behalf'* means acting as *diksa* guru after Srila Prabhupada departs, not as a proxy before he departs. (*'Disciple Of My Disciple'*)

Thus again we have not just different, but completely contradictory explanations.

Exchange (6)

Exchange (6) give us the key evidence for the GBC which revolves around 3 phrases spoken at the end of the tape: *'He's*/(His) *Grand-disciple'*, *'disciple of my disciple'* and *'regular guru'.*

But these phrases are qualified by the phrase '**When I Order**', and the GBC have come up with at least 4 different interpretations to try and explain away this phrase in a way that they hope will not compromise their position. Unfortunately they really have no position since they simultaneously claim:

1. That the order was subsequently given in July. (*'Continuing the Parampara',* Siva-Rama Swami, 1994; *GII*, 1995)
2. That the order was given on the tape itself. (*'Disciple of My Disciple',* 1997)
3. That the order was given personally by Srila Prabhupada specifically to various individuals. (Drutakarma Dasa, 1998)
4. That the order was given generally and continually to everyone many times by Srila Prabhupada previously. (Hari Sauri Dasa, 1998)

Summary

In conclusion we have a short conversation where:

1. It is not clear to the GBC what is being said (different transcripts)
2. It is not clear to the GBC what is being spoken of (proxy or *diksa* guru)
3. It is not clear to the GBC when the answers are applicable (before or after departure)
4. It is not clear to the GBC how the gurus are activated. (when the order is given)
5. At least half the tape directly reinforces the N.C.I.P., with the rest interpretable within the paradigm, depending on the transcript chosen.

The above is enough to discredit any argument that the transcribed conversation constitutes sufficient evidence to overturn both an institutional directive, and violate the N.C.I.P. which Srila Prabhupada had consistently stressed and practised. It is clear the above evidence hardly constitutes an overwhelming case for abandoning the *'no change in International Society for Krishna Consciousness paradigm'.* Indeed we can see that the above evidence unequivocally only satisfies 1 of the 3 criteria required, (2

depending which one of the above interpretations is accepted), in that the conversation was held with a group of GBC members.

B) Evidence from the Order to 'Become Guru'

It is claimed that Srila Prabhupada has many times instructed his disciples to 'become guru'. In fact this evidence itself falls into two categories:

1. ***References to 'becoming guru' in connection with the *'amara ajnaya'* verse.**
2. ***References to 'becoming guru' in connection with the 'law of disciplic succession'.**

Evaluating the above evidence in line with 3 criteria established earlier, we note immediately that actually none of the above evidence is given in any institutional form, and thus it immediately does not satisfy criteria 2 given earlier. Rather evidence here is either given in private letters to individuals, or in lectures to a small fraction of the movement. Indeed It is highly significant that the key evidence that is put forward in this category is:

- A private letter to a deviant disciple (Tusta Krishna, 1975) who was a supporter of someone desirous of initiating even whilst Srila Prabhupada was physically present, and which basically tells him that such activity must wait until Srila Prabhupada has at least departed - a letter that was only even made public 10 years AFTER the time for which the exemption is claimed. And even then the letter may never have ever come to light had it not been discovered due to the unauthorised activities of someone who, ironically, was waging a battle against the activities of the unauthorised gurus.
- A general comment made to a one-time visitor to the temple in 1971 (Room Conversation with Mohsin Hassan), in which Srila Prabhupada made statements that he himself clarified more precisely and rather differently to his disciples and in his books later on (see letter to Alanatha , 1975, and many comments about the Gaudiya Matha), and which was only discovered a year ago.

In sum, the GBC are supposed to manage on the basis of the instructions they have received. They can only implement the July 9th directive in accordance with whatever other instructions they may have received in this regard. We have seen that there are no instructions in the books or in other institutional directives that impact on the implementation of the July 9th directive. The GBC have no mandate to manage based on trying to avoid the implementation of institutional directives that they have specifically been told to institute by searching 20 years later for other instructions that Srila Prabhupada may have spoken privately on a one-off basis.

Thus having already failed in one criteria, for completeness let us see how the evidence scores on the other two criteria. In terms of criteria 1, the need for the evidence to be clear-cut and overwhelming, we find:

- For category a) evidence, the *"amara ajnaya"* references, in the explanatory purports to the *'amara ajanya'* verse it states that: **"it is best not accept any disciples"** (*C.C,Madhya*, 7:130). Also the instructions for *'becoming guru'* here state that virtually no qualification is required except being able to repeat what one has learned. Thus whatever is being spoken of here, it is not a *Diksa* Guru, the issue at hand.
- The instructions given in category b) regarding following the 'law of disciplic succession' simply set out the etiquette that *diksa* guru activity must not take place whilst the guru is physically present. The existence of such a 'law' is not in dispute. But the 'law' does not automatically go on to authorise everyone and everyone to initiate after that time period has passed. It simply states that such an activity is possible after this time-period, not that everyone is now free to indulge in it without authorisation from the Guru do to so. Otherwise if the 'law' itself was the authorisation, it would mean that the only prerequisite required to act as a diksa guru would be to wait for the guru to depart, i.e. it would be automatic.

Thus there is nothing here that even remotely comes close to providing clear-cut and overwhelming evidence for exempting initiation from the N.C.I.P.

Thus criteria 1) is also not satisfied.

Finally we come to criteria 3, the need for the evidence to specify the time-limited restriction for the exemption:

- In category a), the *'amara-ajnaya'* evidence, the instructions to *'become guru'* are not restricted in their application to only after the Guru departs, but rather order everyone to act immediately. Thus these instructions cannot be specifying activity that is different in nature to when Srila Prabhupada was physically present. Thus the application of these instructions post-*samadhi* simply support the N.C.I.P.
- In category b), the *'law of disciplic succession',* evidence, there IS reference made to initiation activity being limited to after the Guru departs.

Thus in conclusion we see that at best, some of the evidence, satisfies 1 of the 3 categories only. Thus again we do not see the class of evidence that would justify this great deviation from the N.C.I.P.

Going even further we may note the following additional points:

- This evidence to 'become guru' is also put forward as a 'standing order', which has always been there, and thus there is no need of any institutional directive for this. But to become *Diksa* guru does requires specific authorisation from the predecessor acarya (*S.B.*, 4.8.54).

This of course would be unnecessary, if indeed the order had always been there eternally.

- The evidences from the *'amara ajanya'* and the 'law' categories both directly contradict each other. The *'amara ajnaya'* instructions make no restriction on qualification, time-period for applicability, and DO make a restriction on the taking of disciples, in complete contradiction to what is stated by the 'law', which specifically makes reference to taking disciples without limit, being strictly qualified, and only acting after the guru has departed. Thus at the very least, the evidence for the *'amara ajnaya'* category is completely invalidated by the evidence put forward in the other category, and thus in reality there is only one category of evidence that can even be put forward - that to do with the 'law'. (For completeness we have also examined every single quote in this category ever produced in any GBC paper as evidence for Srila Prabhupada's disciple's becoming *diksa* guru, in a separate appendix)

In conclusion there is no instruction issued to the institution authorising an individual to take up the role of diksa guru in ISKCON once Srila Prabhupada departs. This would be the very minimum required if we were to overturn the July 9th directive and radically change the N.C.I.P. that Srila Prabhupada had set up for ISKCON. Neither can such an instruction be assumed as a standing order for the institution.

C) Evidence from the Nature and History of the *Parampara*.

The evidence put forward in this category is not done in the form of any specific instructions, but simply as an axiomatic 'understanding' that would make an exemption for initiation from N.C.I.P. obvious. It is argued that the concept of change in the issue of initiation is inherent due to the need to maintain the *parampara*. Historically the parampara seems practically defined by change alone, with each link in the disciplic succession being succeeded by another in due course of time. This however is not disputed. This is why we specifically called the paradigm, **'No Change in ISKCON'** , *not* 'No Change Eternally'. The issue is- does Srila Prabhupada need to be succeeded within the life-time of his institution in order to continue the *parampara*. Or more specifically be succeeded upon his physical departure, since the argument which is put forward is that historically *diksa* has always been performed only when a *diksa* guru was physically present on the planet at the moment the initiation ceremony took place.

While this recourse to historical example may have truth, we need a sastric injunction to the effect that *diksa* can only occur due to the physicality of the *diksa* guru. Otherwise through historical example one could prove anything. Historically all previous gurus have been Indian, yet no on is arguing that we should practice this now due to historical and traditional consideration, at least not in ISKCON. Thus the issue is the need for an instruction from Srila Prabhupada to this effect. And the instructions must be relevant to Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON. Because instructions to the effect that normally there is a period of mutual examination between Guru and disciple, and that one must 'approach' the spiritual master etc. and therefore physicality must be assumed, are self-defeating, since Srila Prabhupada did not practice these things himself. Rather he taught that all these aspects could be devolved to his representatives. Even the acceptance of the disciple was devolved. Thus Srila Prabhupada had no involvement whatsoever in the formalities of initiation. Thus Srila Prabhupada's tradition and example cannot be compromised, lest we are arguing that what Srila Prabhupada did was also bogus. Indeed the only instruction that could both - sanction the initiations Srila Prabhupada authorised pre-departure - but also prevent them occurring in the same manner in ISKCON now; would be one which stated that diksa is only permissible if the *Diksa* Guru is encased in a physical body at the exact moment the initiation ceremony takes place. The instruction must say precisely this. Any other injunction would suffer from either not preventing the initiations still taking place now, or also declaring Srila Prabhupada's initiations bogus. Of course no such instruction exists in Vaisnava philosophy.

The *Parampara* will be 'Stopped'

A related variation on the same objection is that the '*parampara* will stop' or the '*parampara* must continue'. All these objections of course assume that Srila Prabhupada is incapable of continuing the *parampara* himself. And such assumptions could only be valid if again it could be proven that the *parampara* can only be continued if one is in possession of a 'physical body'. And again such an assumption could not be proven just by recourse to historical example, (see above), which in effect is only saying 'well that's the way its always been done'. The issue is not how it has always been done, but how it can ONLY always be done. Thus again we would need the same instructions from Srila Prabhupada as above. All these considerations about physicality are rendered even more absurd when it is taken into account that Srila Prabhupada specifically taught that physicality is immaterial to the process of spiritual life. There are many such instructions to this effect, with a complete appendix having been compiled of many dozens of such instructions.

Thus the issue is not one of *parampara*, which deals with the issue of succession per se, but succession due to the absence of physicality within an institution, which is another issue altogether.

Also the related objection that succession must take place sometime SOON, or within a certain time-period, if not on departure, also makes no sense, because if the *parampara* can be continued by Srila Prabhupada for 1 year after his physicality has gone, then why not for the life-time of his institution? We would then need an even more absurd *sastric* injunction:

'An *acarya* can maintain the *parampara* without the need for physicality, but only for a length of time that cannot equal the life-time of whatever institution he has happened to found. Rather the length of time must not be 'too long' after the departure of the *acarya,* with 'too long' to be defined by the GBC.'

Needless to say this piece of nonsense is not taught by Srila Prabhupada either.

Indeed even the examples we have from history do not preach the issue of succession taking place due to physicality, with our most common examples of *parampara*, taking place before physicality was even extinguished:

Brahma -> Narada

Narada -> Vyasa

Vyasa -> Madhva

And more recently:

Bhaktivinoda Thakura -> Gaurakisora Babaji

And *Bhagavad Gita* 4:1, the standard example to illustrate the *parampara*, involves off-planet *diksa*, which is exactly what would happen now, with Srila Prabhupada still being in the material universe (letter to Jayapataka, 11/7/69).

Thus there is nothing from either the history or the concept of the *parampara* that is relevant to succession taking place in an institution due to lack of physicality. Neither is there anything in Srila Prabhupada's teachings to this effect. On the contrary Srila Prabhupada teaches that physicality is not in any way relevant to the process of spiritual life.

Conclusion

1. **The N.C.I.P. is applicable to ISKCON, and in particular to initiation.**
2. **No instructions from Srila Prabhupada authorising a deviation from the N.C.I.P. are present, especially in the matter of initiation.**
3. **As a result there is no justification whatsoever for having changed the system of initiation, and in that way removing Srila Prabhupada from his position as ISKCON's initiating *acarya*.**

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